

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

It is my pleasure to transmit herewith the Annual Report of the National Endowment for the Arts for the fiscal year 1996.

One measure of a great nation is the vitality of its culture, the dedication of its people to nurturing a climate where creativity can flourish. By supporting our museums and theaters, our dance companies and symphony orchestras, our writers and our artists, the National Endowment for the Arts provides such a climate. Look through this report and you will find many reasons to be proud of our Nation's cultural life at the end of the 20th century and what it portends for Americans and the world in the years ahead.

Despite cutbacks in its budget, the Endowment was able to fund thousands of projects all across America — a museum in Sitka, Alaska, a dance company in Miami, Florida, a production of Eugene O'Neill in New York City, a Whistler exhibition in Chicago, and artists in the schools in all 50 states. Millions of Americans were able to see plays, hear concerts, and participate in the arts in their hometowns, thanks to the work of this small agency.

As we set priorities for the coming years, let's not forget the vital role the National Endowment for the Arts must continue to play in our national life. The Endowment shows the world that we take pride in American culture here and abroad. It is a beacon, not only of creativity, but of freedom. And let us keep that lamp brightly burning now and for all time.



William J. Clinton

President of the United States